

**PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION  
CITY OF RAMSEY  
ANOKA COUNTY  
STATE OF MINNESOTA**

The Ramsey Park and Recreation Commission conducted a regular meeting on June 11, 2020, at Emerald Pond Park, 6000 142<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Commission Members Present:      Chair Shane Bennett  
   Vice Chair Brandon Sis  
   Commissioner Nathan Barten  
   Commissioner Russell Bayer  
   Commissioner Matthew Guck  
   Commissioner Jennifer Leistico  
   Commissioner Justin Loss

Commission Members Absent:      None

Also Present:                              City Council Liaison Nadine Heinrich  
   Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Mark Riverblood

**1.      CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Bennett called the Park and Recreation Commission meeting to order at 6:36 p.m.

**2.      CITIZEN INPUT**

Dan Schultz, 14345 Tungsten St NW, stated that he lives close to the park and walks through it most days. He stated that in the past 14 years he has seen positive improvements and some elements that he questions. He questioned the City's long term plan the vision of all the parks and for maintenance. He pointed out maintenance that is needed at the park related to overgrown plants and the pergola. He stated that the pond is also in need of dredging because of the sediment that has accumulated. He commented that it appears the City is too busy building new parks and forgetting about the maintenance needs within the existing parks. He also highlighted some of the improvements that he has enjoyed at Emerald Pond Park and other parks in Ramsey.

Chair Bennett thanked the resident for his input. He explained that the purpose of holding the summer meetings in different parks is to gather information from residents on the specific parks.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood confirmed that he has ongoing communication with Mr. Schultz and appreciates his input. He provided details on the stormwater ponds and their intent, noting that the pond accumulates vegetation over time. He commented that there is not a system or plan for dredging stormwater ponds. He agreed that there is a need to cut

back some brush. He noted that he has had difficulty finding a contractor to repair the pergola and provided an update on the water feature improvements. He noted that the City is short on workers and has struggled to find enough seasonal workers to even apply for the temporary positions. He stated that he noticed the irrigation system at the park is apparently not working at present and noted that staff will follow up with that repair.

Mr. Schultz suggested that perhaps the City reach out to residents around the parks that would perhaps be willing to volunteer or contract to complete the repairs.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood replied that there are volunteer opportunities within the parks but noted that some repairs are more complicated and require a contractor.

Chair Bennett noted that park maintenance is an ongoing discussion and thanked the resident for his input and feedback.

### **3. APPROVE AGENDA**

Motion by Commissioner Barten, seconded by Commissioner Sis, to approve the Park and Recreation Commission meeting agenda as presented.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chair Bennett; Commissioners Sis, Barnes, Barten, Bayer, Guck, Leistico, and Loss. Voting No: None. Absent: None.

### **4. APPROVE MINUTES**

#### **4.01: Approve Park and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes**

Motion by Commissioner Bayer, seconded by Commissioner Leistico, to approve the following Park and Recreation Commission Regular Meeting Minutes:

- Park and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes dated May 21, 2020.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chair Bennett; Commissioners Leistico, Barnes, Sis, Bayer, Guck, and Loss. Voting No: None. Absent: None.

### **5. COMMISSION BUSINESS**

#### **5.01: Approve Planning Framework for Highway 10 South Planning Area – Riverstone South**

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood stated that the purpose of the case is to provide high level direction for the subject property and establish a policy framework that will assist the future developers in providing sketch plans that would meet the guidelines. He noted that the Planning Commission reviewed and approved the framework at their last meeting. He stated that this Commission will focus on the park and trail elements and could also provide comments on tree preservation. He advised that the Environmental Policy Board will also provide

input on tree preservation. He stated that once all the Boards and Commissions have provided their input, the City Council will review the document. He provided details on the existing conditions and adjacent property uses and identified future land uses. He provided details on the road connection that would be proposed for Bowers Drive and other elements discussed by the Planning Commission including density transitioning. He stated that Capstone is proposing to build a similar development to that of Riverstone, north of Highway 10, on the parcel.

Councilmember Heinrich referenced the connection to Bowers Drive and asked if there would be a barricade rather than an actual road.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood stated that there was a neighborhood forum held online to gather input. He stated that the Planning Commission further discussed the topic at their meeting the previous week and it was his understanding that the neighborhood was generally okay with a connection that is more narrow, at 20 feet, rather than a full width street. He stated that although barricades were discussed previously, he did not believe that idea moved forward, as the additional connection will provide a benefit in terms of public safety and public works.

Chair Bennett asked if the road connection could be used by vehicles and pedestrians or whether it would only be used by public safety and public works.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood stated that the Mississippi River Trail will not go through that location. He stated that he believed the recommendation of the Planning Commission was that the connection would be a narrow street that vehicles could travel on. He did not believe that many others, outside of those on Bowers Drive, would choose to use the connection. He stated that the City has the wherewithal to site parks and communicated that with the developer, noting that the intent would be to preserve the beautiful wooded area on the site within the parks area. He asked if the Commission also believes that the park should be within the wooded area and not in the open area of the development. He stated that it is the opinion of staff that a small neighborhood park would be warranted in this development. He noted that the wooded area could provide the theme for the park, using the suggestion of a tree fort concept.

Commissioner Leistico asked the number of homes that would be within the development.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood replied that there is not yet a count of the homes, noting that the intent is to establish this framework that the developer could use to develop their sketch plan.

Vice Chair Sis stated that he would agree that the wooded area is an asset and would support locating the park in that area.

Commissioner Guck asked the size of the wooded area.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood replied that the wooded area is between 16 and 20 acres. He stated that he has communicated to the developer that the park would only need to be about one acre. He noted that it is likely that when a development plan comes forward, additional tree preservation may be required along the 50-foot buffer. He stated that staff

will work with the developer to site the park around specimen trees in order to preserve the highest quality trees.

Commissioner Bayer asked if there is a location within the development that would not only fit with the intent to preserve high quality trees, but also connect to the trail system to allow residents from other neighborhoods to access the park as well.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood confirmed that there would be sidewalks along each street in the subdivision. He noted that the Commission could recommend a trail in lieu of a sidewalk to connect to the park. He noted that type of recommendation would be helpful at this point, as the desire is to provide broad direction that the developer can incorporate into their sketch plan.

Commissioner Barten stated that if one acre or even five acres were used for park, would the remaining treed area be preserved or removed.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood commented that the area for the park would typically receive Park Dedication credit. He stated that the developer also desires a zoning amendment, which provides the City with additional leverage. He explained that he would want to see the developer provide the land for the park without receiving Park Dedication for that. He stated that instead the trees included in the park area would count towards the tree preservation requirements. He noted that arrangement would allow the City to use the Park Dedication funds to build a creative park. He stated that because the developer is requesting a zoning amendment, there is opportunity to negotiate for things the City would desire such as preservation of the trees, park land, and Park Dedication fees that could be used to build a creative park. He commented that the developer could submit a sketch plan as early as August, with plans to potentially begin construction in spring of 2021.

Chair Bennett referenced an adjacent area that could be developed in the future adjacent to the Riverstone subject property and asked for input on the vision for park use in that area.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood referenced the grey area that is not part of this proposal, noting that there is a public/private park desire identified within the Comprehensive Plan along the river. He noted that the neighborhoods could be connected through trails to allow residents to access both proposed park areas.

Chair Bennett stated that he would agree with the ability to preserve the largest number of trees possible, focusing on the higher quality trees for the park location. He stated that perhaps the park be located somewhat closer to the connection to Bowers Drive as that would provide the ability to connect the different neighborhoods with trails.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood identified the areas with the higher quality trees, per the tree inventory work completed thus far and his walk through of the property.

Councilmember Heinrich asked if there was feedback from the Bowers Drive neighborhood related to a park.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood stated that he was unsure if the park element was discussed as the focus seemed to be on density transitioning, tree preservation and the connection road. He stated that there will be more opportunities for public comment as this moves forward.

Chair Bennett noted that some elements will be dependent upon the goals of the developer, as empty nesters would have different desires in a park.

Councilmember Heinrich commented that it seemed the developer desired to place high density units near the solar array with the larger lots adjacent to Bowers Drive.

Chair Bennett agreed that would be a logical layout.

Commissioner Sis referenced the 50-foot buffer and asked if that would remain wooded.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood stated that the 50-foot area is owned by the City and the City would maintain control rather than an HOA, so that area would remain wooded.

Motion by Commissioner Sis, seconded by Commissioner Barten, to recommend that the City Council adopt the document as an official, yet nonbinding policy document, together with park and trail recommendations to guide future conversations pertaining to Riverstone South as discussed by the Commission.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chair Bennett; Commissioners Sis, Bayer, Barnes, Barten, Guck, Leistico, and Loss. Voting No: None. Absent: None.

## **6. COMMISSION/STAFF INPUT**

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood highlighted upcoming recreation programming and modified summer events.

Commissioner Bayer commented on the dog park and stated that it would be helpful to have tables in the shade for residents.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood commented that he will look into it to determine if there would be a seating option within the proposed new addition to the off-leash area.

## **7. ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Commissioner Bayer, seconded by Commissioner Loss, to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chair Bennett; Commissioners Barnes, Sis, Barten, Bayer, Guck, Leistico, and Loss. Voting No: None. Absent: None.

The Park and Recreation Commission meeting adjourned at 7:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Mark Riverblood  
Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent

Drafted by Amanda Staple  
*TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.*